$20 Million to Increase DSP Wages Included in State Budget for FY18

This July, Governor Christie signed New Jersey’s budget for Fiscal Year 2018, which included $20 million to increase wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). The appropriations are to be used to increase wages for DSPs providing children’s behavioral health services and supports for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities made available through New Jersey’s Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) within the Department of Human Services (DDD), and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL). In October, the New Jersey Joint Budget Oversight Committee will provide direction on how the funds will be applied to contracts with eligible providers to ensure increased wage payments for DSPs.

The increase was supported through the advocacy efforts of the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage, an advocacy group including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families, provider organizations, and DSPs. Learn more about the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage on their website: http://www.njdspcoalition.org/.
Professional Development Opportunities for DSPs

The Boggs Center’s Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series

Kim Zoeller, President and CEO of Ray Graham Association, an Illinois-based provider organization, will present a Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series on “Implementing Personalized Supports” on September 28th at the APA Hotel in Woodbridge, NJ. The presentation will focus on strategies to identify personally-defined outcomes, practical solutions for day-to-day implementation of supports, and success stories. There is no fee to attend, but registration is required. For more information about this and other sessions, and to register online, visit: http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/boggscenter/dd_lecture/sessions.html.

NADD Annual Conference Scholarship for DSPs

Direct Support Professionals can apply for the chance to receive free conference registration for the NADD 34th Annual Conference & Exhibit Show, “Reaching Your Potential & Beyond: IDD/MI,” held this year on November 1-3, 2017 in Charlotte, North Carolina. DSPs interested in this opportunity should complete the Conference Scholarship Application by September 22nd.

College of Direct Support Course Highlight

Home and Community Living

DSPs play an important role in supporting people with disabilities to live in their own homes and communities. The College of Direct Support course, Home and Community Living, teaches DSPs to assist those they support in transforming where they live into a home of their own. This course provides information on home living support, including tips for assisting people with decorating, organizing, cleaning, and maintaining a home based on their needs and preferences. Learners will also explore why it is important to be a good neighbor and how to help those they support to be considerate and contributing members of their neighborhoods.

Request for Success Stories:

DSPs Making a Difference

Do you know a DSP who goes above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of those they support? If so, please consider sharing a brief description that will be used to highlight the great work they are doing in the next edition of the Direct Support Workforce Insider! Success stories can be sent by email to susan.ellien@rutgers.edu.